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Wednesday, 8 August 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2018/677)

Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/683)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2018/677)

Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/683)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq; Mr. Philip Spoerri, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Delegation to the United Nations; and Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof, Women Empowerment Organization in Iraq.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/677, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2367 (2017), as well as to document S/2018/683, which contains the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Following the parliamentary elections held on 12 May, complaints and allegations of electoral fraud and mismanagement resulted in the decision to conduct a partial manual ballot recount. The situation has been further complicated by public demonstrations, which started on 8 July in Basra governorate and spread to other predominantly Shi'a southern governorates and Baghdad. The protesters are mainly young people with complaints over the lack of delivery of basic services, shortages of electricity, lack of jobs and pervasive corruption. However, their messages have swiftly become increasingly politicized, criticizing national leaders and successive Governments for ignoring the needs of the people and social justice, expressing their deep and growing frustration with old political leaders and the political system, based on sectarian quotas they deem corrupt, dysfunctional and stagnant, and deploring foreign interference in the internal matters of Iraq. It is to be noted that many of their demands echo demands made in the demonstrations that engulfed predominantly Sunni governorates several years ago.

The leader of the Fatah Alliance, Hadi Al-Ameri, publicly acknowledged that politicians had failed the people, reconfirming the need to reform the political process and to establish a Government of services and not of privileges for political parties. The head of the Sa'iroun Alliance, cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who himself led massive public protests in Baghdad as recently as 2016, with similar demands as today's demonstrations, urged the suspension of Government-formation talks until the legitimate demands of protesters were met. The historically low voter turnout witnessed during the 12 May parliamentary elections, when sapproximately 60 per cent of eligible voters did not participate, had already delivered a strong message of dissatisfaction with the current state of management of public affairs.

In his Friday sermon on 27 July, the Supreme Religious Authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, called for the early formation of a future Government comprising competent, honest members and a Prime Minister who should be decisive and courageous enough to fight the financial and administrative corruption that is the root cause of most of Iraq's problems. The new Prime Minister should have authority and take responsibility for his Cabinet. The new Council of Representatives should abolish privileges and amend laws that do not achieve justice and equality for the people. Al-Sistani warned that if the new Government failed to abide by its commitments and deliver on its reform programme or if the new Council of Representatives or the Judiciary did not act appropriately, the people, supported by all forces of good in the country, would have no other option but to develop other ways to impose their will on officials.

On 30 July, Prime Minister Al Abadi met in Baghdad with Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani. They also underlined the need to expedite formation of the new Government and to resolve all issues between Erbil and Baghdad based on the Iraqi Constitution.

I note with appreciation that Prime Minister Al Abadi has made major efforts to provide swift and

tailored responses to legitimate popular demands, bringing temporary relief to people living under arduous conditions. However, these measures remain insufficient to address the depth of people's needs and concerns.

I urge political leaders to listen to the voice of the people and accelerate the process of formation of a patriotic, inclusive and non-sectarian Government, with a strong and empowered Prime Minister, which will give priority to political, economic and social reforms, investments, creation of jobs, reconciliation, justice, equality, accountability and good governance, including the fight against corruption; which will put all armed formations under strict control of the State and resolutely act against insubordinate militias and criminal gangs; and which will ensure the full sovereignty and real independence of Iraq, free from foreign interference.

Based on the election law amended on 6 June, the board of judges that was assigned to supervise the electoral process adopted modalities for the recounting of ballots that were subject to complaints or allegations of fraud, in line with the Federal Supreme Court ruling of 21 June. On 6 August, the board of judges announced that the manual recount had been completed. The process then moved on to results-tabulation to generate the provisional election results. Throughout the recounting process, an electoral monitoring team from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), complemented by experts of the United Nations Development Programme, provided oversight, advice and assistance. I welcome the orderly, transparent, credible and well-organized conduct of the recount. I commend the board of judges for its hands-on impartial work. I applaud the dedication and professionalism of all recounting staff, both Independent High Electoral Commission and judiciary personnel. The recounting increased public confidence in the electoral process and election results.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Alice Walpole, and I met with numerous political leaders, women, minority and civil society actors to promote the meaningful participation of women in political, economic and social life, including their representation at the highest levels in political and decision-making structures, including in the future Government and Council of Representatives. On 31 July, UNAMI met with members of the national team to discuss progress and challenges in implementing the Iraqi National action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), including the lack of a dedicated budget to support activities under the plan. I am very pleased to note that Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof, who is seated next to me, participated actively in that meeting.

Last week UNAMI facilitated a meeting with women leaders, civil society activists and elected women, which adopted a consolidated vision of women's demands for the inclusion of gender perspectives and gender equality considerations in the Government's programme. The recommendations are attached to my briefing notes. This week Deputy Special Representative Walpole chaired a United Nations meeting with Iraqi women expected to sit on the next Council of Representatives. Iraqi women politicians undertook to work across the party divide — for example, to establish a women's parliamentary caucus, for the first time, and women's platforms to develop Government policies and strategies to increase women's participation and representation in politics, and foster gender mainstreaming in all parliamentary processes.

On 19 July, Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs and Development Coordinator, Ms. Marta Ruedas, convened a meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum in Baghdad, where more than 20 international partners were presented with 61 United Nations country team projects that are ready for funding through the $1 billion Recovery and Resilience Programme. I urge Member States to support Iraq by accelerating delivery on the commitments made in Kuwait in February.

One year after the liberation of Mosul, United Nations Mine Action Service clearance teams have removed 43,700 explosive hazards in the city, including 1,000 improvised explosive devices. The United Nations Development Programme's Funding Facility for Stabilization has continued to support 2,361 projects, with the successful completion of more than 1,000 in five governorates. Since January, more than 684,000 displaced people have returned, while, as of 15 July, just under 2 million Iraqis remain displaced.

The security and protection environment remains volatile, posing serious protection risks to Iraqi civilians. Abductions, disappearances, detention, increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence and violations of child rights continue. For many, a combination of such factors has led to secondary or repeated displacement.

As of 24 July, donors had contributed $324 million to the humanitarian response plan, which is 57 per cent of the plan's requirements. In order to ensure that critical assistance to vulnerable communities is available, I appeal to the donor community to continue its generous funding.

The ongoing demonstrations in southern governorates have brought to the fore their long-neglected social, economic and development needs. The United Nations country team in Iraq is developing a strategy and programmes to scale up assistance. Furthermore, it is expected that water scarcity in the five southern governorates will increase in the coming months, putting about 25 per cent of a population of 2 million at risk of water shortages, water borne-related diseases and possible displacement. Since the peoples of Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran all share water resources, I urge them to enhance their cooperation in the efficient management of water resources.

Although tangible results in the search for Kuwaiti missing persons have yet to be achieved, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence continues to carry out excavation and exploration missions as well as efforts to identify new witnesses. On 25 July another session of the tripartite mechanism took place in Kuwait. Repeated calls to the international community have prompted Member States in possession of satellite imagery from 1990-1991 to come forward with information that could assist in identifying burial locations. Nevertheless, the procurement of field equipment, the provision of forensic DNA, anthropological training courses and capacity-building for Iraqi and Kuwaiti technical teams remain a major challenge and require further assistance from the international community. I am also pleased to report that the two sides are close to setting a date for the official transfer of a considerable consignment of Kuwaiti property.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Spoerri.

Mr. Spoerri: I thank you, Madam President, for giving the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the opportunity to address the Security Council today on a topic that is at the heart of the ICRC's mission and mandate and at the centre of all aspects of our daily work in armed conflicts around the world. My briefing will focus exclusively on the topic of missing persons from the 1991 Gulf War and the work of the so-called tripartite mechanism, which is chaired by the ICRC.

Under international humanitarian law, parties to the conflict must both prevent people from going missing and clarify the fate of those who do. In armed conflicts people go missing for a variety of reasons, and their families are left waiting. The plight of missing persons and the agony of their families often continue long after conflicts end. The tripartite mechanism was born as a result of the international armed conflict of the Gulf War, which began with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi troops on 2 August 1990. Shortly after the conflict, Iraq, Kuwait and members of the coalition — Saudi Arabia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States — met in Riyadh, under the auspices of the ICRC, and signed an agreement establishing the Tripartite Commission on missing persons in April 1991.

The Tripartite Commission, which is composed of members of the coalition, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq as an observer and the ICRC as Chair of the Commission, set up the Technical Subcommittee, in December 1994, in order to expedite the search process. Tripartite Commission meetings continue to be held twice a year, while the Technical Subcommittee meetings are held five times a year. It has been 27 years since the end of the Gulf war, 27 years since the first session of the Tripartite Commission and 24 years since the setting up of the Technical Subcommittee. To date, 46 Tripartite Commission sessions and 104 Technical Sub-committee sessions have been held with one aim — to trace persons still unaccounted for as a result of the conflict and to provide answers to their families. Shortly after the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the parties to the conflict met and agreed to repatriate prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees captured or arrested during the Gulf War.

In accordance with its mandate and with resolution 686 (1991), the ICRC made arrangements for the general repatriation of more than 70,000 Iraqis from Saudi Arabia to Iraq. It was also arranged for the repatriation of 4,000 Kuwaiti and allied forces POWs and over 1,300 civilian internees and detained civilians of Kuwaiti nationality, or civilians of third countries, from Iraq to Kuwait.

After the successful completion of that phase, the focus shifted to determining the whereabouts and fate of military and civilian persons still missing. The aim was to resolve individual cases through an exchange

of information among the Tripartite Commission members. However, it was only in 2003 that the search for burial sites, in an attempt to locate, recover and repatriate the remains of those still missing, began in Iraq, and followed suit in Kuwait.

Since 2003, the remains of 373 persons have been recovered: 275 persons in Iraq — in Amarah, Karbala, Ramadi and Samawah — and 98 in Kuwait. Those efforts were supported by additional information that the United States and the United Kingdom made available in 2010. Excavation missions also took place in Al-Habbaniyah, Muhammad Sakran, Najaf, other sites in Ramadi and, finally, Khamisiyah, in Nasiriyah, in Iraq, but, unfortunately, no human remains were found.

A total of 1,080 cases of missing persons remain open today within the framework of the mechanism, including 371 reported missing by Kuwait and 700 cases by Iraq. In addition to that, 336 other documented cases of Iraqi missing persons, known as out-of-tripartite cases, remain unresolved. It should be noted that those cases do not constitute the entirety of missing persons cases, but those documented by the mechanism.

Despite continued search efforts, it has been 14 years since human remains belonging to a Kuwaiti missing person have been recovered, and seven years since remains of an Iraqi have been found. The tremendous efforts, and the commitment of all the members, did not yield tangible results. Hundreds of families are still desperately awaiting answers.

The tripartite mechanism experienced several challenges. The most notable being the elapse of time since the cessation of the conflict. The passage of time made finding and contacting, or re-contacting, witnesses difficult. Changes in the topology of the landscape affected the ability to recognize and locate burial sites. The mechanism suffered from the loss of archive material, as well as the lack of the centralization of information, with data dispersed among the various members. Additionally, the lack of availability of the appropriate equipment and machinery proved to be a major challenge for the mechanism.

In response to those major challenges, the ICRC undertook an extensive analysis of all available information, involved various experts and forensic specialists, took stock of the situation in detail and proposed recommendations for future work. In 2017, the ICRC finalized a draft of those findings in its report entitled "The Review Project", which outlines a set of recommendations to move forward, streamlines the search and recovery processes and emphasizes forensic best practices.

Based on those new recommendations, field work and excavation missions will continue on 27 August 2018 in Samawah, which is considered a promising site. The important recommendations of the report, including the correct utilization of satellite imagery, are guiding the optimal implementation of those missions. Despite the fact that no positive exhumation occurred in recent years, there is a newly rejuvenated positive energy and commitment to the revitalization of the Tripartite Commission from all parties.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Technical Subcommittee and Tripartite Commission members, along with UNAMI, for taking upon themselves the task of elucidating the fate of those missing persons and for their cooperation and commitment to the tripartite mechanism and its humanitarian mission. The ICRC was and remains committed to the mechanism and shall spare no effort in the search and recovery of human remains in order to provide answers to the families of missing persons, ensuring their right to know the fate of their missing loved ones.

The President: I thank Mr. Spoerri for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Araf Maroof.

Ms. Araf Maroof: I would like to thank the United Kingdom for providing me with this opportunity to represent the Iraq Cross Sector Task Force for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as its coordinator at this very important meeting. We are a cross-sector body that developed the first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) between 2012-2014, and that has been responsible for its implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. I would also like to thank the Netherlands and Euromed Feminist Initiative for supporting my presence here.

Today, I would like to draw the attention of members of the Security Council to how several crises experienced in Iraq have impacted women, how we have addressed the situation by mobilizing State and non-State actors in the national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) process and, finally, emphasize how much remains to be done and highlight the need for international support and coordination.

From internally displaced people to returnees and Syrian refugees, figures indicate that up to 8.2 million Iraqis require immediate protection and assistance — most of them are women who are denied access to their basic rights and security and lack protection and access to facilities, clean water and sanitation. Ninety one per cent of the camps across Iraq sill include no women in their management, which prevents their needs from being addressed adequately.

Sexual and gender-based violence continues at alarming rates. Women and girls living in areas under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham have been exposed to the most extreme forms of violence as a way to subjugate the whole community, namely, kidnapping for sexual slavery and exploitation, rape and forced marriages. Due to the strong patriarchal culture and tradition, victims are forced to bear social stigma and shame, in addition to the assault itself, and continue to be marginalized by their families and communities upon their return.

Furthermore, even if a great amount of work has been done by the women's movement, there are still discriminatory laws in place that impact women's security and the full enjoyment of their rights. Protection services are offered to women, including in refugee camps, mostly through local and international organizations. While organizations do their best with few resources, there is still a huge need for protection and psychosocial services to reach the most vulnerable, in particular women and girls.

The collapse of the social security network has further impacted the social and economic status of women, and made the face of poverty predominantly female. Female heads of households, the poor, the unemployed, widows and the internally displaced lack access to financial resources and public social benefits, such as social security, pensions and food programming.

Women's security and rights are closely linked to their participation and role in decision-making. In spite of a 25 per cent quota in the Parliament and public institutions, women remain underrepresented or absent in decision-making, including in political parties, as there is a general lack of acceptance of the importance of women's role in decision-making. That is due to the weight of tradition, the economic dependence of women on men, the unequal sharing of family responsibilities and the influence of religious extremism on society.

To address the security needs of the most vulnerable women and girls, in 2012 women's civil society organizations and representatives from 23 ministries and institutions — 15 in federal Iraq and 8 in Kurdistan — as well as legal experts and members of Parliament, formed the Iraqi Cross Sector Task Force, which developed the national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In 2014, Iraq became the first country in the Middle East and North Africa to have adopted a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and now it is the first country in the region to have reported on its implementation of the national action plan.

Iraq is also probably the first country where civil society has been structurally included in the whole process, enabling the voices of diverse women's civil-society organizations from across Iraq and the Kurdistan region to be heard through the Cross Sector Task Force. That broad involvement of authorities, together with civil society, in work on the women's security agenda serves as an example of collaboration and demonstrates their understanding that women cannot be left aside and considered as only victims and that women's needs should be addressed in a comprehensive manner, which is an approach that the national action plan has adopted.

What are the urgent security priorities today that we need the Security Council to work on with the Iraqi Government?

The first is social protection. We need to establish a system to widen women's access to comprehensive specialized services — services related to gender-based violence and free psychosocial and legal support services.

The second is legislation. To ensure protection and enable participation, active work is required to change and annul all laws that discriminate against women. A comprehensive law on violence against women is a priority in order to criminalize all forms of violence against women and girls and end the impunity of perpetrators.

The third is stabilization. Despite huge efforts, the stabilization of Iraq cannot be achieved without drawing attention to and linking it with the women and peace and security agenda, including by allocating a budget for stabilization and resources to that goal.

The fourth is livelihoods. Women, including those who are refugees, internally displaced persons and

residing in host communities, must have access to empowerment programmes and work opportunities, such as vocational training and literacy programmes to end illiteracy, while bearing in mind the double burden and social stigma they carry.

Fifthly, the participation of women must be supported — from high-level political decision-making to local governance — in reconciliation and peacebuilding. Opportunities must be provided for national and local women leaders to participate in peacebuilding and facilitate community cohesion.

Sixthly, last but not least, this year the Task Force is developing the second national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to address those gaps and priorities.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that Iraq has made tremendous and unique efforts on the women and peace and security agenda through the Cross Sector Task Force on its national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). However, in this challenging context, in order to efficiently respond to the multiple needs of women and support their equal participation in peacebuilding and society at large, the Security Council, as well as the broader international community, must ensure greater coordination, demonstrate greater commitment to women's rights, and provide financial and technical support to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We look to the Security Council to strengthen its work and coordination on the women and peace and security agenda in Iraq.

The President: I thank Ms. Maroof for her very helpful briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important meeting. I also thank the briefers, Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI); Mr. Philip Spoerri, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof.

A few days ago, we marked the twenty-eighth anniversary of Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. That was indeed a very sad and painful anniversary. Since then, the Security Council has been working on addressing the effects and repercussions of that invasion. It has adopted dozens of resolutions and many obligations have already been fulfilled. However, the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners, missing Kuwaiti citizens and third-country nationals remains one of the most important humanitarian issues. It has been addressed in a number of Security Council resolutions, notably resolutions 687 (1991), 1284 (1999) and 2107 (2013). The issue remains an open wound and the families of the missing persons are still suffering. We have learned of the fate of only 236 out of 605 missing individuals. We have not discovered the fate of any prisoner or missing person since 2004, and unfortunately we have achieved no progress in that regard.

We value and appreciate the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which heads the meetings of the tripartite mechanims and its Technical Subcommittee. We express our gratitude and appreciation to the Iraqi Government, represented by the Ministry of Defence, which has been making great efforts in that regard. We hope that those efforts will be pursued and redoubled in order to close this humanitarian file and put an end to the suffering of the families of the missing persons. For its part, Kuwait has spared no effort to support those endeavours.

We call on UNAMI to continue implementing its mandate with regard to the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners, missing persons and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, according to resolution 2107 (2013). In that context, we support the Special Representative in implementing his mandate and the task of the Mission pertaining to providing advice and assistance to the Iraqi Government and support for the political process and reconstruction efforts. We are aware of the magnitude of the challenges that Iraq is facing and that it needs international support to ensure its security and economic and political stability.

We commend the achievements of the Iraqi Government and its liberation and recovery of territories that were under the control of Da'esh. We welcome the recent holding of parliamentary elections, and hope that the ongoing consultations among the different political parties will be successful so that Iraq is able to form a Government of national accord that encompasses all sectors of Iraq's population.

Kuwait, as a neighbouring country, is committed to providing support and assistance to the new Iraq and strengthening our relations in all areas in order to overcome the disastrous consequences of the

actions of the previous regime, which destabilized the whole region.

Kuwait has done its utmost to assist Iraq in overcoming challenges and threats to its security. We provided logistical support to the international coalition against Da'esh and helped to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of Iraqi internally displaced persons. We have cooperated with Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank in hosting, in Kuwait last February, the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq and the rebuilding of areas liberated from Da'esh. We decided to provide urgent assistance, in line with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to meet the needs of the Iraqi brotherly people and to improve services in some of the southern governorates where demonstrations have taken place recently. We trust that Iraq will overcome such difficult circumstances.

We would like once again to thank Special Representative Mr. Jan Kubiš for his efforts despite the immense difficulties and challenges which he faced during his mandate.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We commend the convening of this meeting, and we thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof and Mr. Philip Spoerri for their briefings.

We note with concern the protests in various Iraqi cities, some of which are violent, and the consequent climate of distrust and instability to which they give rise. We are particularly concerned about the possibility of new outbreaks of extremism and violent insurgency at a time when, following the important elections held in May, a new Government must be established in order to meet the legitimate demands of citizens and to deal with the significant challenges facing the country.

We commend the progress made towards the prompt conclusion of the electoral process following the complaints submitted and the end of the manual recounting of votes, as well as the establishment and underpinning of a Government capable of leading the country towards a sustainable peace. We underline the importance of the international community continuing to support and to assist the Iraqi reconstruction process.

In line with the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/677), we underline the importance of the full participation of women and young people in the formation and the political life of the Government, as well as the process of rebuilding trust, in particular with the Kurdistan region.

We look forward to progress on establishing the investigative team on the atrocity crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, particularly since there continue to be attacks on and the killings of civilians by the remaining terrorist elements.

We underline that, in order to effectively deal with that threat, it is necessary to address its root causes by promoting justice, the rule of law and the inclusive and sustainable development of the country. Peace should serve to improve the quality of life of the population. In that regard, we highlight the national and regional efforts, supported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations Development Programme, to establish assistance, reconstruction and development programmes. We also highlight the development of the national poverty reduction strategy and the 2018-2022 development plan geared towards a fairer and more efficient distribution of oil resources in the various regions of the country. We also look forward to the development of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework, in line with the recovery and resilience programme proposed by the Secretary-General at the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq held in Kuwait.

We believe the efforts to promote the return of a large number of refugees to their places of origin in safe conditions to be important. However, we believe that it is also necessary to promote conditions to ensure their livelihood and well-being. The severe water shortage is therefore of great concern, given its impact on health, the desertification of cultivated land and security, which is particularly critical in the Basra region. It is necessary to prevent the emergence of conflicts owing to such a situation by adopting effective measures to protect the population, especially the most vulnerable. It is important to prevent their difficult situation from being exploited by violent extremists. We also hope for an early resolution of the pending issue of Kuwaiti prisoners and the disappeared.

In conclusion, I once again highlight the work of Mr. Ján Kubiš and UNAMI, in particular with regard to the new and essential roles to promote spaces for inclusive political dialogue and internal reconciliation. We believe that they are key to promoting a democratic, just and fair Iraqi society.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I would also like to thank Sweden for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month.

I welcome the briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and thank his team for its hard work and tireless efforts. I would also like to thank Mr. Spoerri, Permanent Observer and Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Delegation to the United Nations; and Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof, coordinator of the national team for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also congratulate all civil society groups on their actions as part of the national team for the implementation of the resolution. That is a true expression of our determination to bring about change and to meet the challenges facing us following decades of disasters experienced by Iraqi society.

My Government welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2421 (2018), extending the mandate of UNAMI. We are grateful for the support of all Security Council members in establishing a new mandate that is unique among its kind in the past 11 years. The mandate calls for supporting Iraq so as to meet the needs of all components of the Iraqi people, including women and young people. It calls also for achieving sustainable development and addressing climate change. We are fully confident that UNAMI will work with the Iraqi Government to respond to those needs. We encourage UNAMI to coordinate closely with the other United Nations agencies in Iraq in order to ensuring continuity in the efforts undertaken, building on the progress made in the humanitarian area and rebuilding and development of local communities, the Government and the country.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Karim Khan as Special Adviser of the Secretary-General and head of the international investigative team on the war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide perpetrated in Iraq by Da'esh, the terrorist organization. We wish him every success in his tasks, which he took up in Iraq on 6 August in accordance with resolution 2379 (2017), adopted to support Iraq's national efforts to ensure accountability among the elements of terrorist Da'esh. This would be done by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq to further promote accountability throughout the world consistent with relevant national laws. We underscore our support for Mr. Khan's efforts and our commitment to providing him with all the facilities necessary to ensure his success. We also look forward to the international community's support for him and his team.

Despite the definitive military victories over the Da'esh terrorist gangs, we cannot say that they and other terrorist networks have been defeated. The propagation of takfiri and extremist ideology has been the driving force behind terrorism in Iraq and represents the greatest threat to national security in the post-victory period. We must adapt our anti-terrorist strategy to combat extremism and address the growing decentralization of such groups, which are seeking to expand their territory and increase their numbers. Further international efforts will be needed to help Iraq devise genuine and realistic strategies targeting the expansion of these groups. We must move from military confrontation to a national and global fight at the individual, society and State levels, nationally, regionally and internationally, so as to prevent these groups from extending their influence or regrouping once again.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war have consequences for the Iraqi people, preventing them from accessing basic services. Such devices maim, paralyse and even kill them, and that is why we will address all challenges that prevent us from meeting our commitments in terms of our technical and medical capacity to help victims and ensure their medical rehabilitation. We need additional financial resources to meet our urgent and growing needs, given our very difficult economic situation. We welcome the efforts of all international partners and donors, and we call on the international community to step up its efforts in this area.

My Government, having rid our territory of the Da'esh terrorist groups with the support of the United States and the other countries of the international coalition, as well as that of friendly and sisterly countries, has announced that it intends to implement a reconstruction plan in areas affected by Da'esh and those that experienced an interruption of economic development and construction throughout Iraq.

We are striving to boost economic development and have enacted policies aimed at strengthening food stability and security in order to reduce the poverty rate in the country and provide job opportunities for young people as part of future programmes aimed at achieving development and reforms. These include the 10-year plan and the five-year plan for development 2018-2022, as well as our poverty-reduction strategy. Our goal is to boost the private sector through the adoption of a policy aimed at strengthening the industry sector, in order to create jobs and encourage the export of locally made products in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are following up on the conclusions of the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq. Reconstruction is no less important than fighting terrorism. Iraq looks forward to enjoying the support of friendly countries in order to finance the recovery programme launched by the Secretary-General at the Kuwait conference, aimed at addressing crises and the causes for the resurgence of terrorist organizations.

My Government is keen to implement the principle of peaceful alternation of political power. We were determined to hold parliamentary elections as scheduled on 12 May. The Iraqi people have learned many lessons from the elections. They hope to form a fully representative Government that focuses on promoting justice and strengthens democracy and good governance, free of nepotism or corruption. Following the official validation of the results by the Federal Supreme Court, the winning political blocs will strive quickly to form a new national Government that will implement reforms in order to use the abundant resources of the country to benefit our people.

My Government supports freedom of expression and popular demands made through peaceful and legal demonstrations without fear. The Government has issued clear instructions to the security forces on the protection of civilian demonstrators, so that legitimate demonstrations are not exploited for political purposes and create discord in Iraq. The Prime Minister, Haider Al Abadi, has established a crisis unit on security and services aimed at implementing the development measures adopted by the Government in response to the demands of those who demonstrated on 14 July. These include the allocation of financial resources and job creation in the provinces of Iraq.

The people of Iraq need sustainable stability. This can be done only through the efforts of all actors to find solutions to the problems and challenges facing the country. Some Iraqi women and children continue to suffer the impact of the negative effects of terrorism, especially those who live in regions that were previously under the control of Da'esh terrorist gangs. Their suffering persists as a result of the security challenges. My Government is working hard to reintegrate persecuted women and children into society and to repatriate children who fought with Da'esh to their countries so that they are not subjected to extremism and trafficking.

My country hopes that the United Nations will support it in implementing the joint communiqué signed between the two parties in 2016, aimed at preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence. This would provide a platform for collective work among religious and tribal leaders and civil society.

I would also like to mention that work is being done between the Iraqi side, represented by the High Commission to investigate reports of violations of children's rights in armed conflict, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UNAMI and UNICEF in order to establish a joint action plan to address any violations regarding child recruitment.

The Government of Iraq has gone a long way in preparing its national report on the implementation of the national plan pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000). We are about to start working on the second national plan. We hope that UNAMI will provide us with the necessary support and advice in completing the first national report and in ironing out any difficulties that may prevent the implementation of the first plan.

Iraq has been seeking to resolve all pending issues with neighbouring countries and is eager to establish balanced diplomatic relations with the international community. We hope that Iraq will be a key factor in achieving economic prosperity in the region, given its various natural resources and strategic location. Since 2003, successive Iraqi Governments have respected the principle of good-neighbourly relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, while seeking to resolve disputes peacefully and establish relations of mutual respect.

My Government wants to fulfil its commitments under resolution 2107 (2013). It is trying hard to

investigate the fate of prisoners and those who disappeared and are citizens of the sisterly State of Kuwait and of other third-country nationals. We are striving to repatriate Kuwait's national archives and assets. My Government has made progress and is in the course of preparing a new set of Kuwaiti property, including television broadcasts, books, a sword and a very valuable painting.

On behalf of my Government and the people of Iraq, I would like in particular to thank Mr. Kubiš, who has led UNAMI for the past three years and helped Iraq through a challenging time. We reiterate our thanks to his team in Iraq and New York for their efforts to help my country. We also thank all the friendly countries that have pledged additional funds in order to implement projects to improve the living conditions and security of the Iraqi people. This demonstrates the interest and belief of the international community in the humanitarian efforts and in achieving stability in Iraq, while benefiting the displaced persons and the host communities inland, in addition to supporting efforts to achieve development in the country.

The President: I again thank our three briefers very much. It was extremely useful to hear about progress on the women and peace and security agenda in Iraq. Iraq is something of a regional leader in this, but obviously there are many challenges. We thank the International Committee of the Red Cross for all the important work it is doing with respect to missing persons. I also extend a huge thank you to the Special Representative and his team in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq for all their efforts in helping to stabilize Iraq still further.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.